The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE RIGHT MUST WIN.

Oh, it is hard to work for God,
To rise and take his part
Upon this battlefield of earth,
And not sometimes lose heart.

He hides himself so wondrously,
As if there were no God;
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Workmen of God, oh, lose not heart,
But learn what God is like;
And in the darkest battlefield
Thou shalt know where to strike.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when he
Is most invisible.

Blest, too, is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye.

God's glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways,
And, of all things on earth, least like
What men agree to praise.

For right is right, since God is God;
And right the day must win.
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

—*F. W. Faber.*

HOW TO MEET TRIALS.

What is religion, regarded as the fruit of the root, faith? The informing spirit of our life. Trust, work, holy courage, hope unfailing, war against all evil, in the faith that God is with us, and wills us to be victors, righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit. Whatever are our sorrows, unless these have been their fruits, we have as yet been stricken in vain. If you ask why does God expose you to affliction if he wishes always for a cheerful heart, you might as well ask why does he expose you to temptation, if he wishes you always to be holy. He wishes our spirit to have its joy and strength in the life of faith, the life of the soul, and not to hang on an accident. God subjects us to suffering that we may be downcast no more than he subjects us to temptation that we may sin. The two cases are in all respects analogous; and, if you argue that abounding sorrow and calamity are the signs of God's will, that the religion of our life should wear only the meek hue of a wan and broken spirit, you may equally argue that abounding temptations must be followed by concession, and that defeat or flight of the soul is the counterpart to the evil that is in the world. But it is not so: evil in the world is God's summons to all holy thoughts and faithful works, to the protection of prayer against it, the aggression of love upon it; and sorrow and suffering are equally God's summons to patience, serenity, heavenly-mindedness, the life hidden in him, the peace that passeth understanding, never cut off from hope, for never cut off from God. Unless we are prepared to maintain that provocation justifies anger, that ingratitude is rightly followed by vindictive resentment, that passion and opportunity lead legitimately to indulgence and sin,—and so of every form of temptation and its counterpart of evil,—

we may not plead that the misery that is in the world, the calamity that is in our own life, have their rightful consequents in a broken and bowed down heart, or that fear and trembling, despair and anguish, the long arrest of peace and joy, can be the intended fruits of any visitation of God.

Will it be said that no one so argues, that no one so mistakes "the worship of sorrow" as to confound passive acceptance of grief with a spiritual offering? What means, then, the plaintive note that almost everywhere is the undertone of our life? What means that frequent experience, which yet always comes with a painful surprise, that, the nearer you approach a man's secret life, the less hopeful do you find him, sighing for support, oppressed with the burden and the mystery of existence, that hardly can a man be found who will confess that, whatever may be his trials, he either sees his way through the darkness of the world, and has strength equal to his day, or that, when he sees it not, he can walk with his hand in the hand of God?

Wherein, then, is the blessedness of those that mourn? Christ says, in being "comforted"; in the victory of their faith, in the endurance of love, trust, and patience, in the untroubled answer of the spiritual nature to the questioning of circumstance, and, until we are thus comforted, we are not one with our leader nor in communion with our Father's spirit. It would be well for us to remember, as one of the many lessons that are deposited for us in the language we employ, that comfort means strength, and that the Comforter is the strengthener. No one who is not lost in superstition will suppose that the blessing and affliction consists in the *suffering* it brings. It consists in the spiritual response to suffering of one whose confidence in the supreme source of love and goodness cannot thus be overcome. It consists in the angels of peace that came to strengthen Christ, when he was willing to drink the cup, that God might glorify his own name. Neither God nor Christ give any countenance to the ascetic spirit: that suffering is to be accepted or desired for its own sake. The sacrifices of love are dear to God; but the sacrifices of self-love, in quest of its own salvation, are not of his exacting. To meet suffering and sacrifice to any extent, that we may carry blessing and joy to others or bear their burdens, is to be in the spirit of God and the fellowship of Christ. Beneficence, and the sorrow whose issue is sympathy, need and will employ all the sacrifice we are capable of. To spend it on ourselves is to spoil the husbandry of God.

But is there nothing divine in lasting sorrow, nothing in it that may befit a child of God living in union with the Father's spirit? Yes, in all sorrow that has its root in love, and is compatible with faith and hope in God, and into which, whatever unutterable yearnings enter, there enters no self-indulgent helplessness, no abandonment, no despair. A heart that never sorrowed would be a heart that never loved. A heart that sighed after nothing would be a heart from which God had never taken the dearest thing he had given: only let the sigh feed the hope, and rise into holier life instead of sinking into self-pitying. Religion sanctions and sanctifies every sorrow that belongs to pure affections; but all such sorrow, consisting in the memory of some blessed experience, gives its distinctest shape to Christian expectation, and never can become wretched until, without the trust of gratitude for what has been, it has ceased to be religious, without hope and without God in the world.

Are there, then, no afflictions which a religious mind may be excused if it meets only with submission and resignation, unmixed with loftier issues? Must not patience only, but also comfort and peace, wait upon sorrows which no earthly hopes attend? A prostrate body, that can never be equal to the common work or know the common bliss of life, set apart, as by a word from on high, from the daily affairs of men, who are heard at a distance by the solitary one as if rushing past his grave, uncertain reason, oppressed and fluttering, hideous moral evil brought very close to you, clinging to those who color your existence, the lightning of God falling on your household tent out of a cloudless sky, the invisible hand laid without warning on those who make the strength of your strength, the life of your life,—are *these* things to be encountered not only with serene and tranquil faith, but also to evoke new spiritual life? Of their awful severity there is no question;

but how are they to be met? What, in regard even to these, is the answer of the spirit? And, surely, it implies something very hollow to speak of meeting these sad aspects of existence with submission and resignation, but without peace or hope or newness of life; for, if there is no hope, no trust, no call, *why should there be* submission or resignation, except as the stoic's yielding to necessity, which is not piety, but prudence? Whence will relief come, such true and divine relief as spiritual insight brings? "Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame should be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." This may be hard, that is not to be denied; but is it right, just, holy, lovely,—a demand upon the faith that works by love, which the abounding goodness of God, with his clear indications of eternal purpose, entitles him to make?

Children, then, of the God of all comfort, and brothers of every suffering man, we live true to our spiritual lineage, to the family bonds of Christian hearts, only as we go to our father for light and strength, and "turn not away from our own flesh," but share what is ours, and take of theirs, as God has given to each for the sake of all.

—*John Hamilton Thom.*

THE STILL HOUR.

DAILY RENEWAL.

Leave me not, leave me not alone,
Thou spirit strong and sweet!
Work on till I am all thine own,—
Thy hallowing grace repeat!

Stint not thy visits, Guest divine!
Each day I need them still;
Stay not that shaping hand of thine,
Thy wondrous work fulfil!

Thou who didst once this soul renew
Still thy sweet skill essay;
Through all my life the work pursue:
Renew me every day!

Each day I slip, each day I roam,
Each day I faint and tire:
Wilt thou not every day o'ercome?
And every day inspire?

Leave me not, leave me not alone,
Thou spirit strong and sweet!
Work on till I am all thine own,—
Thy hallowing grace repeat!

—*T. H. Gill.*

O Lord, keep my heart pure. Strengthen in me that which makes me thy child, stamped with thine image, the will to choose good and reject evil, the love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, the tender, self-forgetting love of my fellow-creatures, thy other children. Oh, make me single-minded, steady through good report and evil report in the task I have undertaken, caring nothing for self-glorification, but only to do as perfectly as I can the work my hand findeth to do. Let me rise each morning, saying with my whole heart and mind and strength, Lo! I come to do thy will. O God, let me bear the pain and sorrows and failures of my life, as the blows and wounds the soldier must meet in battle, content to know that I fall doing my duty, and that thy purpose cannot fail. Be my stay and guide through the burden and heat of the day, that I may be able each night as I lie down to rest to say, I have done this day the work thou gavest me to do, and to feel that my labor has not been in vain, since it tended to make thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And, when the last night cometh, grant to me, O Father, the supreme joy of saying with him who showed us this way, even though, like him, I say it from the cross, It is finished.

—"*Alone to the Alone,*" *compiled by Frances Power Cobbe.*

THE MOTHERS' CLUB.

[*Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

[When the *Cheerful Letter* was first planned, we hoped that the mothers who read it would be interested in this department, and would write letters or short articles for it, giving their personal experiences and asking and answering questions. But we have not been successful in this direction, receiving very few letters from our readers; and our Mothers' Council or Club has consisted largely of selected articles. We give this month some letters cut from the columns of a daily paper, hoping that other mothers may find them suggestive, and may perhaps be inspired to write themselves to *The Cheerful Letter.* L. F. C.]

DISCIPLINE.

I don't think I have the disciplining of children down to a science by any means,

but we all have some little trick that works well at times. My eldest boy will be five next month. He had the same habit that one of the sister's little girls has, not understanding that she must be chastised without returning the same. I solved the problem by explaining to him what mothers were for, telling him that little girls and boys didn't know right from wrong, and consequently would do very naughty things if they had no mamma to tell them what was best to do. This proved very interesting, and made a marked change. If there was something he wanted to do, and for which he could see no reason for my denial, I had only to say,—

"What are mothers for?"

He would say, "To tell what's best."

This has worked fine with me. I hope some one will try it. My boys differ so much, the same system doesn't work with both. The eldest in his baby days was trained, oh, so splendidly; but I didn't try to make the second one so rigidly polite and obedient, and before he was two and one-half, and I find he is just as well. And then, too, we don't have so much time to sit for half an hour or more trying to make them pick up a brush or something else after the second and third comes along; but, if the first is good and obedient, the others are apt to imitate him. If he is bad, they surely will.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

Much of the suffering in the world to-day is caused by parents teaching their children to give a blow instead of a kind word. This sounds harsh, but let me explain. You tie reins on the front of an infant's carriage, give him a whip, and then tell him to drive the horse. That is the beginning: thereafter, as the child grows older, the whip is associated in its mind with driving a horse as much as the reins. Then parents will get a dog to amuse the child. In many cases it may be fun for the child, but it is death to the dog.

To let a young child play alone with a dog or any other animal is the next step in the cultivation of cruelty. I think no human being has as beautiful a disposition as a dog or horse. Take, for instance, a hot day, when it is an exertion to move. The dog, if left to itself, would seek the shade and sleep. We all know healthy children are always ready to play. Unless one watches, a child will keep tormenting a dog to make it play; and it is only a step between tormenting and torturing sometimes. And let me say here, Don't torment a child or allow any one else to: they have their rights as well as we. Animals also have their rights, which we should recognize. We all want our children well-behaved and well-mannered. The way to make it possible is to teach them to be kind-hearted toward every one of God's creatures.

"Kind hearts are more than coronets" are to me words every true mother should remember. Let us teach our children to be considerate, and now is the time when their minds are so receptive. Uncle Eben said, "A man who drives a lame horse has a lame soul"; but I think it should be his mother had a lame soul. My little daughter, three and one-half years old, has three dogs that are her playfellows; and they do have such happy times. Once in a while she will get provoked if one of them wishes to play after she is tired, and she will slap the offending one; but almost immediately she will go and pat him, saying, "Baby is sorry: she not do so any more." I love children, and hate to see so many being spoiled by over-indulgent parents. Our children are what we make them. Let us teach them to be respectful to their elders, and have reverence for age. In short, let us take our own mothers for our models; for I don't think modern manners are any improvement on the old. My dear mother fell asleep before my little daughter came; but the tender, loving memory of her helps me always to exert myself to bring up my child so that, if I pass out before her, she will remember me with love.

CHILDREN AND VISITORS.

Proud as we are of our children, I think I can truly say we don't "inflict" them on any one. Their daddy says he has been bored so many times by other people's children that he'll make sure none of his friends will stay away for fear of spending an evening watching the children perform their little tricks and tantalize the audience. If company is expected whom we know will want to see the children, they

are allowed to remain in the room with us for about fifteen minutes, and then sent away to bed. They have been brought up to this, and don't expect to stay, thinking it a great treat to come in for a while. In the daytime and before bedtime they have the run of the house, and have learned not to handle everything they see. I don't leave anything around on the floor or where it can be knocked off easily. I let them play on the piano a little, but never when strangers are present. My little boy sings and plays his "own accompaniment (classical)." I hope he will be as fond of music when he is old enough to learn it. However, I have had callers that brought their children with them; and those children would bang my piano all the time they were here, the parents listening and smiling and telling them what fine players they were.

Conversation was out of the question; and I was glad when it was time to say good-by, headaches and shattered nerves left behind. On the other hand, I've been visiting and had to take my turn at smiling, and sit watching baby "shake a da-da" and make a pat-a-cake for a whole afternoon, if I could stick it out that long. Now I am very proud of my children, and love to see their little tricks. My baby, only seven months old, has all those little baby tricks, and I think her very smart; but I don't expect that every stranger will think the same.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE RUSH FAMILY.

Before one is able to learn the names of all our common plants, it is very pleasant to learn the name of the family to which each belongs, and thus to know who are their nearest relatives; for those which resemble each other in certain points are placed together in one order or family, which generally bears the name of its most distinguished member.

Thus we learn that the pink, catchfly, and chickweed all belong to the same family; and by examining a specimen of each of these plants we can discover what characteristics they all have in common. We shall see that their leaves are nearly all opposite to each other, and that the edges of the leaves are entire, not cut or lobed in any way. The stem we shall find more or less swollen at the joints or places where the leaves grow out. The flower ordinarily has five petals and five or ten stamens.

We may compare in the same way roses, strawberries, blackberries, spiræa, or meadow-sweet, and five-finger; and, if we write down all the points that we find them to have in common, it will help us to see what other plants are nearly enough like them to be classed in the same great family, —the rose family. (You will find Miss Youmans's first book of Botany a great aid in writing the descriptions of flowering plants.)

To-day I should like to introduce to you the Rush family, because you will be apt to meet many of its members this summer, and because they have such a strong family resemblance that I think you will have no difficulty in recognizing them.

Their leaves are usually more or less grasslike and the flowers quite small, with six similar greenish or brownish sepals, six or three stamens, and a little greenish seed-pod in the centre. This pod, when young, is surmounted by three slender plumes.

The "wood-rushes" have only three seeds in a pod. There is one quite common species which grows in dry fields and woods, and has grassy leaves fringed with white hairs along the edges, and a pretty cluster of numerous small flowers.

The other rushes are smooth plants, never hairy, and have many little seeds in each pod. They grow chiefly in bogs or wet soil. The common or soft-rush is very abundant in marshy ground. It has smooth, round stems, two to four feet tall, sharp and tapering at the top. The leaves are similar. The cluster of flowers appears to emerge from the side of the stem a short distance below the top. The flowers are greenish, very numerous, and more or less loosely distributed on the pedicel, as the little stems that bear them are called. This rush was used formerly in England for strewing on the floors of dining-rooms, bedrooms, etc., also for plaiting into mats and chair bottoms; and the pith of the stem was used as wicks for candles.

The slender rush is common in low places by the roadside and in fields. It is a

very green plant, from nine to eighteen inches tall, with wiry stems and grassy leaves.

Some of the rushes have knotted leaves. When you draw one of these leaves through your fingers, pinching it as you draw it, the leaf seems full of little hard places or knots. There are two or three common species with these peculiar leaves, one of which blossoms in the fall.

Those of you who go to the seashore will perhaps find a pretty rush with blossoms so dark colored that it has received the name of "black grass," though it is not a grass at all, but a true rush, as you will see by examining it. *Cora H. Clarke.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Brighton Branch offer the following. Address Miss Carrie L. Murdock, Brighton, Mass., corner Washington and Allston Streets.

Magazines.

Munsey, 1896–98, 1900–01; *Junior Munsey* (six months), 1901; *Scribner's*, 1899–1900; *Cosmopolitan*, 1895 (six months), 1898–1900; *Century* (nine months), 1897–99; *Pearson's*, 1901; *St. Nicholas*, 1874–86; *Harper's Young People*, 1885; *Atlantic Monthly*, 1888; *New England Fireside; Good Housekeeping*, odd numbers in 1886–87; *New England Magazine*, odd numbers; *Youth's Companion*, 1901; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1895–1901; *Journal of American Chemical Society*, 1898; *American Chemical Journal*, 1897; *Journal of Franklin Institute*, 1898; *Science Abstracts*, 1900.

Books.

"Han of Iceland," Victor Hugo; "Three Men in a Boat," Jerome K. Jerome; "The House of Seven Gables," Hawthorne; "Black Beauty," A. Sewell; "Franklin Primary Arithmetic"; "Opera Chorus Book"; "Sunday School Hymn and Tune Book."

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Miscellaneous.

"Scenes from the Life of Saint Paul"; "Miss Toosey's Mission"; "Threefold Praise," F. R. Havergal; "Star of Bethlehem," Weatherly; "Legend of Thomas Didymus," James Freeman Clarke; "Sun Prints and Sky Tints"; "Essays," Jeffrey; "The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain," Beatrice Potter; "The Initals"; "Uncle Lisha's Shop"; "Ethics for Young People," C. C. Everett; "Advice to Mothers"; "Florida Days"; Milton's "Comus"; "Only a Governess," R. N. Carey; "English Orphans," Mary J. Holmes.

The following books are offered by the Springfield Branch. Address Miss Clara D Hoar, care of Samuel Bowles, Crescent Hill, Springfield, Mass.

"The Silent Partner," Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward; "Cranford," Mrs. Gaskell; "Whiteladies," Mrs. Oliphant; "Gentleman Jim," Mrs. Prentiss; "A Window in Thrums," Barrie; "Companions of my Solitude," Arthur Helps; New Testament, Old and New Versions on Opposite Pages; "Letters to Young Housekeepers," Mrs. Bayard Taylor; "Essays," Henry T. King; *Scribner's Magazine* for 1893.

Educational.

Greenleaf's "First Lessons in Numbers"; Cyr's "First Reader"; Barnes's "New National First Reader"; Stickney's "Second Reader"; Stickney's "Third Reader"; Stickney's "Word by Word" (Spelling-book); "American History Stories," Vol I.; "Stories of Heroic Deeds"; "The Children's Hour" (recitations for young children); Webster's "Little Folks' Speaker"; "Select Essays and Poems," Emerson (Academy Series); "Merchant of Venice" (for use in schools); "Black Beauty"; "Jack" (child's story).

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

I would be glad to receive a Wentworth's "Algebra" and Maury's "Physical Geography" for my sisters who go to the graded school. I am a member of the "Cheerful Letter Society." My correspondents are Miss Emily Stephen and Mrs. Horace Humphrey. These books will be gratefully received. (Miss) Pattie A. Monroe, Rockingham, Richmond County, North Carolina.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—I wish to thank you for your kind remembrance in the past, and to ask a continuance of that kindness for the future. The long autumn and winter months would indeed be lonely to my husband and myself if it were not for our Cheerful Letter friends. We do not wish to be selfish in our requests, but would like any reading by Pansy, Rosa Cary, E. P. Roe, Louisa Alcott, or Sophie May. We read our books and pass them on to those who enjoy them and could not afford the purchase of reading matter. One dear friend sends us the *Youth's Companion*, and it is a great blessing in our neighborhood. The boys are so anxious to borrow and read the papers, and we keep them going from place to place. The dear friends of the Cheerful Letter Club can never know in this world the good cheer and happiness and contentment they are sending all over our land. On a farm the worst disease is discontentment, and by cheery reading that can be cured and a taste for good reading and an education be cultivated; and this is just what our dear paper is doing. May God bless the members of the club that by hard work are sending sunshine to many a shadowed home. I should feel as though one of my dearest friends had left me, had I to lose *The Cheerful Letter*. Gratefully yours, Mrs. Edward A. Clark, Levant, Maine.

Mrs. J. L. Cohoon, Penn Yan, New York, asks for "Gates Ajar."

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—I wish to thank those of whom I have received reading in the past, and come again asking for more. I would be delighted to receive a Bible or any kind of good books for children or any kind of religious book or papers. All reading is passed on to others, like myself, not able to buy. So I hope I have not asked for too much. Mrs. Albert Owen, Dobyn, Patrick County, Virginia.

Dear Friends,—I am the old lady that broke her arm and could not work nor write. Some kind friend wrote to you, and you sent me so much good reading. It helped me so much, and helped others, too. I gave it whenever I could, but for a while

I have had no settled home. I do not get much now. I do miss it so much, but I am now with my son and think I will stay with him. I would be so glad if you would send me some reading. I am in my eightieth year, and can go to church but little. I do need good religious reading, and miss it so much. My son, I am sure, would be glad of any reading,—magazines or any kind you have. I would be so thankful if you will remember me. A. M. Kiger, 121 North Fourth Street, Springfield, Illinois.

Mrs. Dora Rhodes, Greely, Colorado, asks for "He fell in Love with his Wife."

I cannot thank my Cheerful Letter friends enough for the quantity of nice books we have received this summer, most of which are text-books for the children. They will, I trust, be of great value to them. I wish to thank the church in Cleveland, Ohio, especially for the large box of nice books and papers received a month since. I would be glad if some one could send me Maury's "Manual of Geography" and a large dictionary. I would also be glad of some good books to read, and will pass them on to others who are not able to buy. Lela C. Herndon, Indiantown, Orange County, Virginia.

Dear Madam,—I write to request that you enter my name on your Book Club as an applicant for reading matter. I live ten miles from any town on a farm; and my few leisure moments I find very dull, and would certainly esteem it a great favor should you let me join your club. The poor are in danger of intellectual starvation when they live way off in the country. I assure you, you will be giving much pleasure and instruction to one who is not able to buy such literature as she would like. Mrs. Elizabeth Lohr, Rapidan, Virginia.

Mrs. J. W. Gale, Concord, North Carolina, asks for "Stepping Heavenward."

Mrs. James A. Tyner, Lock Box 254, Collinsville, Indian Territory, will be glad to receive any copies previous to May, 1902, of the *Church Woman's Magazine* (formerly the *Ladies' Aid Society Journal*), published in Des Moines, Iowa, also *any* book giving plans or ideas for church entertainments.

I have never asked for reading through *The Cheerful Letter*, but I see many requests printed; and, as I am a farmer's wife with two small children and closely confined at home with my duties and no means to provide literature, I write to ask for something to read. Any books or magazines will be appreciated. Short stories or picture books, anything that will assist a young mother in entertaining two mischievous little boys. I would like to have a correspondent. (Mrs.) Delia A. Brown, Heareford, North Carolina.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* is asked for by Miss Mattie Anglin, Martinsville, Henry County, Virginia.

I have seen several copies of *The Cheerful Letter;* and I do enjoy reading it so much, especially the sermon. I am a farmer's wife, and live far out in the country and have few advantages. I have been in bad health for some time. We have no conveyance for going to any place. I am not able to walk, therefore I do not get to church. I have only one little girl; and, oh, what a comfort she is to me! If you do not know the hardships of a poor farmer's wife, they are many. I would also be glad to receive magazines or any kind of reading matter. Mrs. T. A. Greer, Petra, Caldwell County, North Carolina.

I would be very glad of a "Psychology" if any one has one to pass on. Please direct to Rowland, North Carolina, R. F. D., No. 1. Thanking all the Cheerful Letter friends for past favors, Mrs. A. J. McQueen.

I was handed a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* several days ago; and, as I am a mother of four little children, the eldest a girl of nine years of age, I should enjoy becoming a member and receiving some reading for them, and journals or periodicals for myself, since I am very closely confined at home with the little ones. I should be so pleased also to receive music, especially Hoffman's arrangement of "Il Trovatore" and the "Superb Song Book." I should be thankful for anything sent me, and will gladly pass on to those whom I know will appreciate, like myself unable to buy. Rev. Stone, of Baptist Church, this place, is my pastor. Mrs. F. W. Watts, Box 531, Shawnee, Oklahoma.

I would be glad to receive reading, as I am a farmer's wife, and live in the mountains,—live two or three miles from church, one mile from the school. I have four children, and am not able to buy books for them. I would be so thankful to you for a primer, second reader, and spelling book, and any kind of good reading for myself. I will pass it to others after reading. Mrs. Mary Wood, Shuff, Patrick County, Virginia.

Dear Madam,—I would be glad to receive novels, magazines, or story papers. Will pass them on to others after I have read them. Mrs. Mary Parks, Lincoln, Wash.

Will Mr. Jack Philpin send his note of request again? The name of the town and part of the note were illegible.

The editor calls the attention of all who send notes containing offers or requests to read the directions printed with the Book Club. Every month it is necessary to correct the names of States, written Va., La., Cal., Col., into Virginia, Colorado, etc., and often to copy almost illegible letters.

The editor notices that many of our younger members express a desire for "a good education," and deplore the lack of books, schools, and other advantages. There is no more important part of a good education than learning to write a good hand, and this is within the reach of almost all. All that is necessary is care, perseverance and ten minutes a day of time. Few are unable to procure some kind of paper, and a pen and ink or a pencil. In every kind of life a good handwriting is a great advantage, and the lack of it an injury and hindrance.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Contributions to this column may be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.*]

I.

Syncopations.

The syncopated letters, placed in the order given, spell a word meaning majestic: —

1. Syncopate a garment, and leave a humble dwelling.
2. Syncopate a spy, and leave an inhabitant of Great Britain.
3. Syncopate humorists, and leave a verb.
4. Syncopate was able, and leave chilly.
5. Syncopate a kind of pipe, and leave a gardening instrument.
6. Syncopate part of a barrel, and leave to succor.

— *St. Nicholas.*

II.

Towns in Massachusetts.

1. An overseer and a weight.
2. A prefix and a measure.
3. A season and an open lot.
4. Two farm buildings.
5. A stream and the distance between two points.
6. To conceal and a pleasure ground.

III.

Cross-word Enigma.

In fox, but not in camel;
In camel, but not in cat;
In cat, but not in pigeon;
In pigeon, but not in bat.

My whole, it stands for power,
And waves o'er many seas;
My whole is, too, a flower
Which grows on marshy leas,
Is on the cities' crowded streets:
Now guess me, if you please.

— *St. Nicholas.*

IV.

There is a number which reads from right to left and from left to right the same. Its first two figures, if divided by a certain number, give a quotient of 9; its tens and units (or the two numerals at the right), if divided by a certain number, give a quotient of 9; if the whole number be divided by 9, the quotient contains 9; if the whole number be multiplied by 9, the product contains two nines. And, if the two numerals at the left be placed under the two at the right and added to them, the sum will be one-nineteenth of the whole number or answer. What is the number?

— *St. Nicholas.*

Answers to Puzzles in September Number.

I.

1. Cannon.
2. Gun.
3. Pipe.
4. Sword.
5. Spear.
6. Arrow.

II.

Napoleon.

III.

Frank. Twenty-four.

IV.

Enigmas.

1. Pencil.
2. Sea.
3. Bear.
4. Moon.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

He went but rarely into society, scarcely knew by sight any of the country people living near him; never rode on horseback, took no outdoor exercise save that of walking,— and this often from a mere sense of duty, and with a book in his hand,— and, although living in one of the loveliest spots in all England, and not insensible to its charms, preferred the shelves of his library to the finest prospect in the world. He found his relaxation where he found his daily labor, within the walls of his study. "I can't afford," he wrote, "to do one thing at a time: no, nor two, neither. And it is only by doing many things that I can contrive to do so much; for I cannot work long at anything without hurting myself, and I do everything by heats. Then, by the time I am tired of one, my inclination for another is at hand."

Southey was, as we have said, an affectionate husband and a fond father; and, whenever in his correspondence he alludes to his home happiness, it is with a tenderness and warmth of feeling that are eminently beautiful. Moreover, he was a constant and at all times noble friend, ready, even when in straits himself, to help with money or with his pen those who were more straitened. No one ever acted better the part of the Good Samaritan; and, while he never forgot a benefit received, it would seem as if his own magnanimous charity had no place in his memory. The story of his life abounds in instances of the most generous self-denial and of a steadfast goodness of heart which never shrank from the demand made upon it. Heavily burdened as he was with work, he was continually accepting fresh literary labor in order to benefit others. Nor was this all, for he received under his own roof his wife's widowed sister, Mrs. Lovell; and when Coleridge, in that strange waywardness of mood which his vice of opium-eating can alone explain, deserted his wife and children, it was with Southey that they found a home. There is a beautiful anecdote given by Lockhart of a poor music-master offering Scott all his savings in the hour of his adversity. A similar story may be told of Southey, who, when his friend May, an early benefactor of the poet, fell into difficulties, sent him more than £600, which was all the money he possessed.

If the poet had strong and generous affections, he was also a good hater, but this feeling was shown to principles rather than to persons; and if, which was not seldom, political animosity led him to write bitterly against his antagonists, there was not one of them for whom after the moment of writing he retained an unkindly feeling. It is said that he seldom spoke harshly of any man with whom he had once conversed. He had too large a heart for petty animosities, and he was wholly free from envy. At the time when a whole year's sale of a ponderous epic failed to produce the poet £5, Scott was gaining his thousands, but not a word of bitterness falls from Southey on this score; and the praise he bestowed on his contemporaries, a few of them more distinguished than himself, but the larger number men of far inferior power, is frequently more generous than just.

Although not, as we have said, a sociable man, he had the good fortune to know intimately most of the illustrious authors who made the early part of this century so famous; and, long before Wordsworth had received the public recognition which was his due as the greatest poet of the age, Southey, like Coleridge, expressed his admiration of his friend and neighbor in no niggard terms. This noble triumvirate, by the way, reminds us that probably not since Shakespeare's day have three men of equal mark lived together on terms of intimacy and affection. Landor called them "three towers of one castle"; and, as all the world knows, they have been absurdly classed together as forming a school of poetry. In a measure, indeed, every poet influences his fellows; and no man, however original his genius is strong enough or self-contained

enough to take a completely independent path. Scott, it is evident, owed a debt to Coleridge; Coleridge, strange to say, derived some of his early inspiration from Bowles; Byron, the poet of passion, owed much to the meditative muse of Wordsworth; and Wordsworth himself, though but slightly affected by the works of his brother poets, sometimes caught their notes and was under the spell of their genius. Southey, who possessed a fatal facility of verse-making (he had written more than 30,000 lines before he was nineteen), paid chief homage, as other poets have done, to the transcendent imagination of Spenser, whose "Faery Queene" he read through thirty times; and of contemporary poets he showed most regard to Wordsworth and to Landor. He acknowledges, also, that he derived much benefit from Cowper and "more from Bowles"; and he appears to have caught his unfortunate fancy for unrhymed stanzas from a Dr. Sayres, whose name is probably unknown to modern readers. But he belonged to no school; and, whatever may be his ultimate position in English poetry, it is one which has at least the merit of being independent.—*The Cornhill Magazine.*

THE SECRET OF HEALTH.

Don't worry. Don't hurry. "Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow." "Simplify!" "simplify!" "simplify!" Don't overeat. Don't starve. "Let your moderation be known to all men." Court the fresh air day and night. "Oh, if you knew what was in the air!" Sleep and rest abundantly. Sleep is nature's benediction. Spend less nervous energy each day than you make. Be cheerful. "A light heart lives long." Think only healthful thoughts. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Seek peace, and pursue it." "Work like a man, but don't be worked to death." Avoid passion and excitement. A moment's anger may be fatal. Associate with healthy people. Health is contagious as well as disease. "Don't carry the whole world on your shoulders, far less the universe. Trust the Eternal." Never despair. "Lost hope is a fatal disease." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—*Laws of Life.*

A QUEER AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL.

It is less than a century since the European hunted the platypus to his lair, the first published account of him having appeared in the "Naturalist's Miscellany" of London in 1799. It would be interesting to know the effect that was made upon the first discoverer of this animated paradox, than which nature furnishes nothing more anomalous in its combination of duck-like mandibles and webbed feet (the latter further equipped with spurs like the game fowl, and claws like the true burrowing quadrupeds), mole-like eyes and otter-like fur, body of mushquash and tail of beaver. One who was addicted to his cups might recognize in the creature merely the figment of an alcoholized brain, and an artist regard him as the prototype of one or another of those uncanny monsters which sprawl upon the floor of Saint Anthony's cave in Teniers's bizarre pictures of the temptation of that holy character. Our earliest and, in fact, almost our sole accounts of the platypus are confined to bald and literal descriptions of his appearance and habitat, from which we learn that he is confined to Tasmania and the southern districts of Australia; and, although his race has been thought to embrace two or three species, it is now generally agreed to consist of only one.

You may repair many times to the favorite haunt of the platypus before you see him; and to discover the retreat to which he modestly retires on observing your presence is a task impossible, except by accident, to any other than a blackfellow. To these cunning hunters, however, there are no secrets of beast or bird. Their unerring instinct tells them when the platypus, diving near the edge of the stream, is in quest of food, or when he is seeking the submerged entrance to his burrow. And they will advise you either where to point your gun in expectation of the animal's reappearance, or where to dig in the bank in confidence of striking the grass-lined nest wherein he dwells and rears his remarkable family.—*Scribner's Magazine.*

To Mrs. Claudia Akers and others. Your requests might have been printed this month, had they been sent to the Book Club Secretary.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, October 3, at 25 Beacon Street, at 10.30 A.M. All persons interested are cordially invited.

Please notice the change of address of our secretary, Miss Langmaid, to 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass. All who desire correspondents are reminded to write directly to Miss Langmaid.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE: —

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR, —Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, Little Nahant, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.